



NEWS RELEASE

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CONGRESSWOMAN NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ RECEIVES SBA ADMINISTRATOR'S LEADERSHIP AWARD

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez today received the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) prestigious *Administrator's Award for Leadership*. SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez presented the award at the Administrator's Luncheon during the 18th Annual National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week celebration.

Congresswoman Velázquez is the ranking Democrat on the House Small Business Committee and represents the 12th District of New York, which includes parts of Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan. She was chosen to receive the 4th annual *Administrator's Award for Leadership* in special recognition of her outstanding long-term support, tireless efforts and unwavering commitment on behalf of the nation's minority small business community.

"I'm delighted to present the Leadership Award to Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez. For as long as I've known her, she has held a firm stance on ensuring that minority owned businesses receive their fair share of contracts," said Administrator Alvarez. **"She is a member of a committee that has a very prominent role in promoting business growth and opportunity in economically depressed areas and I am confident that she will continue her fight to open the doors of opportunity to minority communities across the country."**

Congresswoman Velázquez is the first Hispanic woman to serve as Chair or Ranking Member of a full committee in the history of the House of Representatives. The House Small Business Committee is responsible for providing oversight on a wide array of programs and federal contracts totaling nearly \$200 billion annually. It actively works to streamline regulations and tax codes to allow small businesses to operate more efficiently.

"This award really belongs to all the minority small businesses that have helped make this economy so successful," Congresswoman Velázquez said. **"I am privileged to accept it on their behalf. For my part, I pledge to make sure that minority businesses get their fair share of the \$185 billion a year in federal contracts, and that they can take full advantage of new markets in neglected communities."**

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Rep. Velázquez's loyalty to minority businesses has always been firm. She has continuously fought for legislation to protect the interests of small and minority-owned businesses.

President Clinton has declared this week of September 24 through September 30, 2000, as MED Week. In his proclamation, the President urged all Americans to join together in honoring minority entrepreneurs across the country in appropriate observances.

The SBA's Office of Government Contracting and Minority Enterprise Development and the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency are co-sponsoring the MED Week Conference that is taking place at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA from September 24-27, 2000.

The conference's theme is "*New Horizons: The Emerging Minority Marketplace.*" Conference topics include: the purchasing power of minority communities, how to gain access to capital and how to become more e-Commerce savvy. The conference will also provide opportunities to network at the MED Week 2000 Business Expo. Finally, there will be award ceremonies to honor minority entrepreneurs, minority business advocates and leaders in the corporate community.

For more information, contact the MED Week 2000 Office at 1-877-MEDWEEK or visit the Web site at www.medweek.gov.

Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.

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